

File Code: 1950
Date: February 5, 2013

Dear Interested Public,

The **Pilgrim Creek Timber Sale Project** Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been completed. You are receiving this information because you have previously requested to be included on the project mailing list, or have submitted specific written comments related to the project. Comments previously received during the scoping period were evaluated to help us identify significant issues and develop alternatives.

The Pilgrim project area encompasses an area of approximately 36,602 acres in the Pilgrim Creek drainage, about five miles west of Noxon, Montana. The legal location of the National Forest System lands within the decision area is T25N, R32W, R33W, R34W; and T26N, R33W; R34W; PMM. Four action alternatives and a no action alternative were analyzed in the DEIS. The activities in the alternatives were designed to meet a variety of needs both in the natural and human environment. These alternatives were developed to meet the following project objectives: 1) reduce stand densities, improve growing conditions, and increase the proportion of root disease-resistant tree species in the area; 2) increase age class diversity in lodgepole pine communities; 3) provide local employment related to forest management and supply forest products to the economy; and 4) improve big game forage production.

Alternative 3 has been identified as the Forest Service Preferred Alternative. Alternative 3 includes harvest of approximately 18 million board feet of timber on approximately 1,434 acres, by skyline and tractor logging systems. Silvicultural systems include approximately 510 acres of commercial thinning and 898 acres of regeneration harvest. Other actions associated with Alternative 3 include prescribed burning of natural and activity generated fuels on 5,998 acres; 26 acres of aspen restoration; construction of 4.7 miles of new permanent roads and 1.1 miles of temporary roads, reconstruction of 47 miles of existing roads. Implementation could begin in 2014. Details of the alternatives are included in the DEIS.

Please review the Pilgrim Creek Project DEIS and send your comments and suggestions by the end of the comment period. Comments may be submitted in writing through the Postal Service or through electronic means. In accordance with 36 CFR 215.5, comments must be postmarked or received 45 days from the date the Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIS is published in the *Federal Register* (estimated to be February 8, 2013). The publication date in the *Federal Register* is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. Only those who submit timely comments will be accepted as appellants following the release of the Pilgrim Creek Timber Sale Final EIS and Record of Decision. Comments must be specific to the proposed activities and area being analyzed. They should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the document on which the comment is being submitted; (3) specific facts and supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider; and (4) signatures. Please submit written comments to me, John Gubel, at the above address or by fax to (406) 827-0718. Business hours are 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

Electronic comments may be submitted to: comments-northern-kootenai-cabinet@fs.fed.us. The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments. Acceptable formats are PDF, MSWord, Word Perfect, or RTF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

All comments become part of the public record associated with this project, and are available for public review, along with the name(s) of the commenter(s). Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and



considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215.

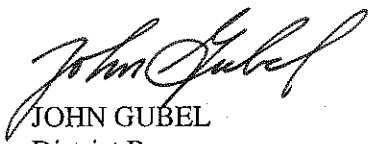
The DEIS is available on the Kootenai National Forest website under Forest Projects, and at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=31645>

If you have any questions concerning this project, or wish to receive a hard copy or DVD of the DEIS, please feel free to contact Doug Grupenhoff, project leader, at the above location, or by calling (406) 827-3533.

Thank you for taking time to comment. Your comments will be valuable to the Interdisciplinary Team as they prepare the Final EIS. We anticipate the Record of Decision (ROD) will be completed in April 2013.

Sincerely,



JOHN GUBEL
District Ranger